A

SHORT ESSAY

ON THE

Modes of Defence beſt adapted to the Situation and Circumſtances of this Iſland.

WITH

An Examination of the SCHEMES that have been formed for the Purpoſe of fortifying its principal Dock-yards on very extenſive Plans, which are ready to be carried into Execution by his Grace the Duke of RICHMOND, now Maſter-General of the Ordnance.

ADDRESSED

To the PUBLIC at large, but particularly to the HOUSE OF COMMONS, and the Independent COUNTRY GENTLEMEN of *Great-Britain*.

BY AN OFFICER.

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ON THE

Modes of Defence beſt adapted to the Situation and Circumſtances of this Iſland, &c.

SECTION I.

THE invaſion of a country like Great Britain, of an inſular ſituation and very conſiderable extent, by a powerful fleet and army, either with temporary and particular views, or for the purpoſes of abſolute conqueſt, muſt always be attended with great difficulty, danger, and expence; and can ſcarce ever happen ſuddenly, or come on us unawares, before we have ſome ſort of intelligence or information of our enemies

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deſigns. For the time neceſſarily ſpent in making the immenſe preparations requiſite for ſuch an undertaking, the rapidity with which rumours of every naval or military enterprize, and tranſaction of great magnitude or importance, are propagated by the intercourſe of neighbouring nations; the impoſſibility almoſt of tranſporting ſo large an armament acroſs the ſea, without the knowledge and obſervation of ſome one or other of our cruiſers, and the vigilance which war naturally excites in thoſe that are engaged in it, muſt render entire ſecrecy impracticable, and diſcovery of intention to a certain degree altogether unavoidable. Beſides, certainty or poſitive intelligence is not in ſuch caſes abſolutely required: for even ſuſpicions in time of war ſuggeſt the neceſſary precautions againſt a ſurpriſe. In an iſland like this, then, the neceſſity of having ſtrong holds or indeed any fortifications at all, except ſuch as are requiſite for preventing a *coup de main*, and the bad effects of tranſient and inconſiderable attacks on our dock-yards, &c. may, I think, with great

great propriety, be queſtioned. Accordingly, no extenſive fortreſs has ever been erected in the inland parts of it. But our practice of fortifying has hitherto been confined to its coaſts and dock-yards. I am well aware, however, that a late Writer on fortification has poſitively aſſerted, that, had there been ſome good fortified places in England at the time of the Norman invaſion, the enemy would not have become maſters of the country by gaining a ſingle battle. A fondneſs for the art that he profeſſed, and a deſire to recommend it, led him, unguardedly, into an aſſertion which militates againſt the very firſt and moſt fundamental principles or maxims, which, in reaſoning on ſuch ſubjects, muſt for ever govern the ideas and ſentiments of an intelligent and ſkilful ſoldier. Had there been extenſive or ſtrong fortreſſes in this kingdom when William the Conqueror invaded it, Harold muſt have garriſoned them to prevent them from falling an eaſy prey to the invaders: and this would have occaſioned ſuch a diminution of his active

and moving force, that he could hardly have taken the field with the remainder. The ſmalleſt overthrow or diſcomfiture in ſuch a ſituation, with his acting ſtrength thus diminiſhed, muſt infallibly have been followed ſoon by the ſurrender of theſe very garriſons; a circumſtance that could have only ſerved to add ſtrength and ſecurity, if not inſolence and oppreſſion, to the conqueſt. England was not then loſt for the want of fortifications, but by the imprudence and indiſcretion of Harold, in venturing on a general action. This was the very thing that William had to wiſh for, as nothing ſhort of a deciſive battle could poſſibly have made him conqueror. Had Harold purſued a different line of conduct, had he acted with all his moving force, without coming to any thing general or deciſive, and kept conſtantly hovering on William's line of march and penetration, cutting off his detachments, parties, and convoys, and haraſſing all his ſteps, he would have rendered his progreſs extremely difficult, if not impracticable; would

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ſoon have leſſened both the ardour and number of his troops; and, in a ſhort time, would have reduced him to ſuch difficulties and diſtreſs, as to oblige him either to lay down his arms, or to abandon the country with diſgrace and diſappointment. With ſtrongly fortified places, however, in his dominions, and the greateſt part of his troops diſtributed in garriſons, had he even adopted, on that occaſion, ſuch a prudent and judicious ſyſtem of oppoſition, he could not have carried it ſucceſsfully into execution.

The force of every country, in which there are fortifications, may be very fitly divided, into that which is fixed or ſtationary, and that which is active or moving, and confined to no particular ſcene of operation. The firſt is calculated only for repelling local individual attacks; whereas the laſt is capable of acting every where, as incidents may require. And it is evident, that, whilſt the military eſtabliſhment of a ſtate continues invariable, in whatever

whatever proportion the one is increaſed, in the ſame exactly muſt the other be diminiſhed. Now, it is a maxim in war no leſs certain than an axiom in mathematics, that the force which can be brought to act in all poſſible ſituations, is infinitely preferable, even for the purpoſes of defence, to that which is entirely limited in its operations by locality. Every garriſoned place muſt neceſſarily take from the active ſtrength of a country. No nation, therefore, that acts from policy, and follows the dictates of ſound ſenſe and reaſon, will ever increaſe its fixed force, to ſuch a degree, as to make it bear any conſiderable proportion to its active or moveable force, unleſs there be ſome circumſtances in its ſituation that render ſuch a meaſure both eligible and neceſſary; as there are in that of Holland, for inſtance, which is only a ſort of confederated cluſter, or republic of garriſons. In kingdoms, likewiſe, of great extent and compactneſs, of which the different parts are contiguous and connected, partly ſurrounded only by neighbouring

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ſtates, and having frontiers to be defended, comparatively but ſmall, it may be ſometimes adviſable to have fortified places along theſe boundaries, and to have ſtrong garriſons placed in them, both to check the ſudden inroads of their neighbours, and to cover certain diſtricts, whilſt their moving forces are directed to other quarters. But if the frontiers of a country are very extenſive, and bounded almoſt every where by thoſe of other ſtates, they can neither be completely fortified nor garriſoned, let its military ſtrength be ever ſo powerful, and its reſources ever ſo many and great, ſuppoſing even its whole active force to be converted into a ſtationary one. In ſuch a ſituation, it is both injudicious and impolitic to think of numerous fortifications, particularly in thoſe parts which border on powers that can bring but very ſmall or inconſiderable armies into the field; ſince their incurſions can be only partial, temporary, and of but little effect. Now, fortreſſes that are not ſtrongly manned, are liable to be eaſily reduced, and, when

once taken, are apt frequently to occaſion the entire loſs of the territories in which they are erected. The Emperor of Germany has, in this reſpect, acted both with manlineſs and judgment. It may, indeed, generally ſpeaking, be laid down as an incontrovertible maxim, that any country, in which works are multiplied to ſuch a degree as to require the greateſt part of its acting forces to garriſon them, is in a much worſe ſituation in point of defence, than if it wanted them altogether. Garriſoned places are often calculated chiefly for preventing ſudden irruptions, and for covering and protecting the property of citizens and ſubjects in particular towns and diſtricts. And where ſuch attacks are moſt likely to happen, it may, perhaps, be proper to have them, when they can be kept without weakening much the acting ſtrength of a ſtate. But inſular ſituations of all others ſtand leaſt in need of fortifications: for they are not ſubject to ſudden aſſaults; and they cannot be viſited by an enemy in force from any

any diſtance, without all the preparation, pomp, and parade of war, and the uſual formalities of invaſion, eſpecially if they are of great extent, and poſſeſs conſiderable internal reſources. Even in iſlands that are too ſmall for carrying on advantageouſly the chicanery and management of a defenſive war, and where the inhabitants are not ſufficiently numerous for the purpoſe, it is extremely doubtful, whether works are at all uſeful or neceſſary. For, if the people throw themſelves into forts, and thereby concentrate their ſtrength, it is a ſtrength that is ſtationary and inactive, and capable only of ſhort reſiſtance. And the invaders immediately become maſters of every part, but thoſe on which the works themſelves actually ſtand. Thus cooped up, they have the mortification to ſee their plantations, farms, habitations, &c. deſtroyed; which is a ſacrifice that but few ſubjects have either zeal or loyalty enough to make. Such iſlands muſt always be dependent on ſome ſtate much more powerful than themſelves, and can only

be defended properly by a navy capable of preventing both the approach and landing of troops. For troops, when once landed in conſiderable numbers, muſt infallibly ſucceed in ſpite of any marine whatever. Their ſole defence then reſts on the preventing of a landing, and conſequently muſt be almoſt entirely naval. In ſuch places it is, perhaps, altogether unadviſable to have more troops and garriſons, than what are barely neceſſary for giving ſanction to the buſineſs and forms of government, and preventing internal feuds and inſurrections. For there is ſcarce any power, however ſtrong its military eſtabliſhment may be, capable of garriſoning a great number of them ſo effectually, as to enable them to ſtand out any length of time againſt an invading army, ſuppoſing them even to be completely fortified. And no navy can be ſure of making even ſuch ſmall conqueſts, without the co-operation of an army. But after they are once made, it may, without troops, ſecure them againſt invaſion. At

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any rate it muſt be allowed, that fleets, although they may preſerve, are not at all calculated for making, by themſelves, conqueſts that are large or extenſive. For, in ſuch enterpriſes, their principal uſe muſt ever conſiſt in covering and protecting the tranſportation of armies, and the ſupplies neceſſary for rendering their operations ſucceſsful, particularly if the enemy cannot be ſurrounded by land, but muſt receive aſſiſtance by means of ſhipping from a diſtance. The Weſt Indies are exactly in the predicament of the ſmall iſlands I have been deſcribing. For they are moſtly too inconſiderable, both in extent and population, for carrying on advantageouſly a defenſive war againſt an army even moderately ſtrong, and are ſo circumſtanced in other reſpects, that it is impoſſible for the inhabitants to join in it without ſuffering a total deſtruction of their property. The greateſt number of the planters, therefore, are convinced, by ſad experience, that, in ſuch caſes, it is generally eligible, if not abſolutely neceſſary, for

them to change their maſters without a ſtruggle, finding, that works can only protect them long enough againſt the enemy for the ruin of their plantations, and their own conſequent diſtreſs and bankruptcy. Fortifications and troops, therefore, when multiplied in them to any great degree, are only an uſeleſs expence of treaſure, and a loſs of national ſtrength. The military eſtabliſhment of Great Britain is likewiſe ſo ſmall and trifling, that it is not poſſible for her to furniſh them with garriſons ſufficient for protecting them even againſt ſlight attacks. Their principal, if not ſole protection, then, muſt come from our navy. And it requires but a ſmall ſhare of diſcernment to foreſee, that this country muſt inevitably loſe the whole Weſt Indies, with her naval ſuperiority. The hiſtory of mankind, both in ancient and modern times, furniſhes many proofs of the doctrine I have been advancing. During the firſt Punic war, the Romans found it impoſſible for them

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to cope with the Carthaginians in Sicily, though aided by allies on the iſland, even near as it lay to their territories, in compariſon of Africa, and powerful as their republic then was in infantry, without a naval force to put them on a footing with their enemies at ſea. The exertions they made, from not poſſeſſing a ſingle veſſel, both in point of expedition and magnitude, almoſt exceed belief. Under repeated, diſcouraging, and the heavieſt loſſes, they ſtruggled through ſucceſſive campaigns, to wreſt the ſovereignty of the ocean from a people, who enjoyed it as a ſort of inheritance from their anceſtors. And when, by a final effort, ſupported by unexampled perſeverance and ſteadineſs, they accompliſhed almoſt the entire deſtruction of the Carthaginian marine, they immediately became the indiſputed ſovereigns of Sicily. Amilcar, like a prudent general, continued the diſpute as long as his countrymen were maſters at ſea, or there was the leaſt probability of their continuing ſo, wiſely judging, that the Romans, without a

navy, even with all their other advantages, could not ſucceed eventually. But when he ſaw this ſuperiority gone from his country without remedy, he concluded, that there was no longer any proſpect of ſucceſs, and though, as far as matters related to himſelf, unconquered by his enemies, he prudently put an end to the ſtruggle by a treaty, which yielded to them the ſubject of contention.

Having early in the war before laſt acquired decided advantages over our enemies at ſea, which enabled us to conduct the tranſportation of our armies, and every thing neceſſary for their uſe, conſumption, and ſupport, both with ſafety and expedition, we carried conqueſt into every part almoſt that we viſited, particularly the Weſt Indies, and places not much better circumſtanced for defence. Although they had many more troops at command than we had, they durſt not venture to ſea with them, without encountering the moſt imminent dangers, running the riſk of being taken

taken with all their ſupplies, and thereby ſuſtaining greater loſſes than the actual preſervation of the places they wiſhed to ſave and protect, would have compenſated; whereas, laſt war, feeling themſelves, in this reſpect, on a ſort of equality with us, they were often enabled to act more advantageouſly than ourſelves, as the number of their troops was greater, and might have been increaſed occaſionally to any degree, till the 12th of July 1782, when we obtained a temporary naval ſuperiority over them.

Iſlands, however, like Great Britain, that are extremely populous, poſſeſſed of numberleſs reſources within themſelves, and of ſufficient extent for all the contrivance, ſtratagem, and buſineſs of a defenſive war, are in a very different ſituation from thoſe I have been deſcribing. For, although it muſt, undoubtedly, be allowed, that without a powerful and well-appointed navy, it is impracticable for this country to retain any foreign poſſeſſions, or carry on an extenſive

tenſive commerce; yet, ſuppoſing her marine to dwindle even into inſignificance, it does not therefore follow, that the iſland itſelf muſt be loſt. For, if an army, ever ſo numerous, was even landed with an intention to conquer it, nothing could enſure it ſucceſs, but our own imprudence and indiſcretion in venturing on a general action. This, of all things, therefore, ought chiefly to be avoided. Delays, in ſuch caſes, are the ſame as victories to the invaded, and defeats to the invaders. Whatever country, at the commencement of an invaſion, adopts a different line of conduct, and reſts every thing on the iſſue of a battle, acts under the greateſt of all poſſible diſadvantages, and loſes the principal part of her natural ſtrength, which conſiſts in this, that the peaſantry, after a ſhort reſiſtance, get rid of the dread of arms and the terrors of an attack, and with a little management, from being intimately acquainted with the *chart de pais*, and the ſituations and places they reſiſt in, become equal, if not ſuperior, for the

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purpoſes of defence to any troops they may happen to co operate with. The beginning is always the weakeſt time for the invaded and the ſtrongeſt for the invaders. It is the buſineſs of the one then to wiſh for, and of the other to avoid a general engagement, or any operation whatever, that can prove deciſive with regard to the fate of the kingdom. Every thing, therefore, ought to be carefully guarded againſt that can have the leaſt tendency to bring matters to a deciſion, immediately after the diſembarkation of the enemy, or whilſt they have a ſafe and ſecure communication with their ſhipping: for then they muſt feel themſelves ſtrongeſt, and will naturally wiſh to come to action, as their retreat, ſhould they meet with any diſaſter, can be covered. We muſt drive the country, embarraſs and deſtroy the roads, break down the bridges, &c. and act conſtantly on their line of march, cutting off their detachments, intercepting their convoys, and haraſſing their communications, while we ſtudiouſly, at the ſame time, avoid coming to any ſerious diſpute that might determine at once

the conteſt, or riſking the whole on account of any ſecondary object. To the general ſafety every ſubordinate conſideration muſt give way. Places which cannot ſtand by themſelves without protection, muſt be evacuated and diſmantled, or even deſtroyed, that they may be rendered uſeleſs to the enemy when they ceaſe to be uſeful to ourſelves. And no fortifications or lines of field forts, of ſufficient extent and conſequence to induce us hereafter, on ſuch an occaſion, to give the enemy battle, to prevent them from falling into his hands, ought, on any account whatever, to be erected even for the ſecurity of our principal dock-yards themſelves; unleſs we wiſh to invite him into the country, and furniſh him, after he comes, with the moſt effectual means of rendering himſelf maſter of it, or at leaſt eſtabliſhing himſelf in it ſo completely as to be able, afterwards, to carry on the moſt advantageous and ſolid operations. The preſervation of dock-yards, fortifications, &c. muſt, in caſes of extremity, yield to public neceſſity: no works, therefore, ſhould be erected round

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any of our docks that are not both very limited in their extent and capable of being defended, for ſome time, by an inconſiderable force, eſpecially againſt ſuch armaments as, being too ſmall for a ſerious invaſion, are only calculated for occaſional or deſultory aſſaults. Whoever conſiders attentively the military eſtabliſhment of Great Britain muſt allow, that it cannot ſupply us with a ſufficiency of troops for defending extenſive lines, and at the ſame time enable us to take the field againſt an invading army with the ſmalleſt proſpect or certainty of ſucceſs. And it muſt be admitted by every perſon who thinks and reaſons like a ſoldier, that numerous fortifications are of infinite diſadvantage to us, if we cannot man them properly without robbing the kingdom of its whole active ſtrength: for either the reſt of the country muſt, in this caſe, be left defenceleſs and abandoned to its fate, or they muſt be, in a great meaſure, diſmantled, to furniſh us with men to watch the motions of the enemy: and if they are, they muſt ſoon fall an eaſy prey to him; and when once taken

poſſeſſion of and ſufficiently manned, will immediately form impenetrable lines of circumvallation againſt the united ſtrength of all the remaining parts of the iſland. If they likewiſe happen to be ſo ſituated as to command excellent roads for ſhipping (as the extenſive lines of large works propoſed by his Grace of Richmond at Goſport and Portſmouth effectually do *that* of Spithead) they will afford him, without much trouble, the means of neſtling and fixing himſelf ſecurely as long as he poſſeſſes a ſuperiority at ſea, and enable him, in a ſhort time, to annihilate the trade and ruin the power of Britain, without running the ſmalleſt riſk or hazard himſelf. Of this particular ſituation, however, I will ſpeak more circumſtantially in a ſubſequent part of this Eſſay. From what I have ſaid, it is manifeſt, that no works ought to be made in this iſland, but ſuch as can both be erected at a moderate expence, and are ſo circumſcribed, in reſpect of magnitude and extent, as to require but a ſmall number of troops for their defence: for, in all ſuch

caſes, regard ſhould always be had to the military eſtabliſhment of the nation. Such are perfectly ſufficient for the purpoſe of repelling caſual and tranſient attacks, which, among other things, will certainly point at the burning of our dock-yards. A partial deſtruction, however, of the periſhable ſtores in them, which is all that a bombardment could effect, even ſuppoſing all the neceſſary precautions not to be taken for their ſecurity, can never be an object to an enemy who comes with the ſerious intention and ſettled expectation of conquering the country: for he muſt be ſenſible that the deſtroying of them, although it may partly diſtreſs, cannot tend to ſubdue the kingdom. And he will naturally wiſh to leave undemoliſhed what he expects to ſee his own, that he may receive it as intire as poſſible. To thoſe, to be ſure, who watch every opportunity, in time of war, of doing us ſome miſchief, and creating temporary and occaſional calamities; the firing of our dock-yards will naturally be an object of great moment and material conſideration: but it never can be ſo to him who comes

comes full of the moſt ſanguine hopes of rendering himſelf maſter of the iſland. And if diſappointment in regard to his main object ſhould even lead him to take ſuch a ſtep, it will prove, on our part, a loſs that is only partial, and cannot endanger the general ſafety, or involve in its conſequences the fate of the nation at large. Beſides, if he is once forced to retire and relinquiſh his proſpects of conqueſt, he will find it no eaſy matter, if we take care to do our duty, to execute any ſuch enterpriſe. Armaments of a trifling, ſubordinate, or ſecondary nature, calculated only for haraſſing, deſtroying, and laying waſte, can never remain long aſhore without meeting their own ruin and deſtruction. And to ſuch we may, in moſt caſes, give battle at, or ſoon at leaſt after, their landing, without running much riſk, or dreading the event of it: but when the actual ſubjugation of the country is ſeriouſly intended and attempted, we muſt regulate our conduct by very different principles, and ſtudiouſly avoid hazarding a general engagement. Stratagem and delay muſt then

then be our game, and all inferior conſiderations muſt be ſacrificed to public ſecurity There are few countries better adapted than England to a defenſive war: for it is ſo interſected, in moſt places, with ditches and hedges, as to furniſh all the advantages in this reſpect, of one that is covered with wood, without being ſubject to its inconveniences. In the woods, parties ſeeing but a little way round them, and finding themſelves in ſituations unfavourable for the mutual communication of conduct and deſign by the aſſiſtance of ſignals, cannot co-operate with one another ſo effectually, or act on a line nearly ſo extenſive, as in a country which furniſhes every convenience for ambuſcades, and at the ſame time the means and practicability of ſpeedily conveying intelligence to a conſiderable diſtance. Even in thoſe tracts that are open and not divided into incloſures, there is almoſt, in every part, all that is wanted for the chicanery and buſineſs of defence: and, generally ſpeaking, indeed it muſt be allowed that open and cleared countries are better fitted than woody ones for practiſing

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the whole variety of contrivance and ſtratagem; for there are always ſome little eminences, hollow ways, buſhes, banks of rivers, or rivulets, fences, *&c. &c.* ſufficient for covering parties, not only of infantry but cavalry. And the troops that make uſe of them as places of concealment, ſeeing to a greater diſtance round them than they can in woods, are better able both to diſcern and ſeize the moſt favourable moments for action, and to aſſiſt their friends at the very inſtant of time in which their co-operation is moſt ſeaſonable and advantageous.

I am extremely ſenſible of the great difficulties that muſt always attend the driving of this or any other country: but with proper directions given before-hand, or upon the firſt rumours of an invaſion, to the inhabitants along the ſea coaſts, particularly near thoſe places where it is moſt likely the enemy will land, and the aſſiſtance of ſo good and well-appointed a cavalry as we poſſeſs, it certainly may be effected in ſuch a manner as to leave but little

little behind for him to reap advantage from. Thus circumſtanced, ſhould he, at the head of his army, attempt to penetrate to the metropolis (and ſuch a ſtep, or the bringing of us to a general and deciſive battle, that may determine the fate of the iſland, he doubtleſs will have chiefly in view), he will be under the neceſſity of keeping up a conſtant communication with his ſhipping, and of forming, immediately after his diſembarking, a large and copious depôt, from which he may receive daily and continual ſupplies. For this purpoſe, as his parties and detachments will be obliged to guard not only againſt inceſſant attacks, but alſo perpetually againſt ſnares and ambuſcades, he will be forced to appoint ſuch ſtrong and numerous convoys, that before he ſhall have advanced many miles, the greateſt part of his force muſt unavoidably be employed on this ruinous, toilſome, and diſtreſſing duty. The farther he advances, the longer will be the line he has to keep open and defend, and conſequently the weaker he muſt become. In moſt places, particularly thoſe that are open, our ca-

valry will give us immenſe advantages over him. From that line alone he can act againſt us; whereas we can operate againſt it ſucceſsfully from every quarter. Every day muſt weaken him and ſtrengthen us. Let even the army he lands with be ever ſo great and numerous, we ſhall ſoon be able to outnumber it. For the very peaſantry, after a little practice and experience in this ſpecies of ſervice, will become as uſeful and ſerviceable as the troops they act with. If we, therefore, oppoſe him judiciouſly in front, conſtantly retarding his progreſs, but always avoiding however a general engagement, and at the ſame time act on the flanks of his line of penetration, cutting off his convoys and detachments, we ſhall ſoon force him to retire, and abandon the country with loſs and diſappointment, unleſs there ſhould be near his place of landing ſome ſtrong holds of our own erecting and of very conſiderable extent, which he may throw himſelf into, and maintain in defiance of us, whilſt he is enabled alſo, by their poſitions, to ſupply his army conveniently with every

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thing that is requiſite or neceſſary, without advancing into any particular diſtrict, or expoſing himſelf even to the chance of a misfortune or diſaſter. In ſuch a ſituation, and maſter at ſea, without being in poſſeſſion of the other parts of the kingdom, he might eaſily ruin our trade, and reduce our commercial intereſts to an abſolute ſtate of inſignificance.

From what I have ſaid, it clearly appears that expedition, vigour, and activity, are indiſpenſably neceſſary in the proſecution of an offenſive war, and that caution, prudence, procraſtination, and delay, are peculiarly adapted to a ſyſtem of defence. The annals of mankind furniſh many examples to prove, that this has been the opinion of the ableſt generals and wiſeſt politicians in all ages. Although the forces of the Romans, with thoſe of their allies, amounted to ſeven hundred thouſand infantry, and ſeventy thouſand cavalry, when Annibal invaded Italy, the battles of Trebia and Thraſymene, which were occaſioned by the indiſcretion of Tiberius, and the precipitate raſhneſs of Flaminius, forced them to ap-

point a dictator (an expedient they never had recourſe to but in caſes of the greateſt extremity, as his authority was abſolute, and altogether independent on the ſenate). Fabius adopted the juſt maxims, and regulated his conduct by the true principles of a defenſive war, watching the enemy's motions, and occupying the proper poſts, but never trying the fortune of a general battle. Annibal, on the other hand, was fully ſenſible, that it was greatly to his advantage, not to ſuffer any part of his time to be waſted in inaction, well knowing that nothing ſhort of complete victories can render an offenſive war ſucceſsful; his chief ſtudy, therefore, was to draw his enemies to action: And had not Fabius as induſtriouſly avoided it, the Roman State muſt have been inevitably ruined. The vain and preſumptuous Varro, loſing ſight of theſe ſalutary maxims, brought his country, by the battle of Cannæ, to the very brink of deſtruction: And if ſhe had not poſſeſſed immenſe reſources, as well as uncommon wiſdom and firmneſs in her councils, ſhe muſt without doubt have ſunk under the calamity.

It was our buſineſs, as ſoon as poſſible after the commencement of the American war, to procure a general engagement. When one year paſſed, however, after another, without producing any thing deciſive; when ſucceſſive campaigns were conſumed in expenſive and unprofitable excurſions, it required no great ſhare of ſagacity to foretell the iſſue of the conteſt. It is, I hope, to be preſumed, that we did every thing in our power, and practiſed every ſcheme and contrivance to bring matters to a ſpeedy determination, and force the main body of the enemy to hazard a battle. One complete victory over their principal army muſt have concluded the war.—And if we tried our utmoſt endeavours to bring them to action, no ſmall degree of credit is certainly due to thoſe, who could ſo uniformly and prudently avoid it. As it was ſaid of Fabius, "cunctando reſtituit rem," ſo it may be obſerved of the American leaders, "cunctando ſervarunt rem." Certain it is, that throughout the whole of laſt war, we were attempting to reconcile inconſiſtencies,

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and jumbling things abſurdly together, that never can thoroughly unite. We were ſtriking the Americans on one ſide of the face, and ſtroking them on the other. We diſplayed a ſpecies of affected and unnatural lenity, which is altogether incompatible with military operations in general, and more eſpecially with the meaſures abſolutely neceſſary to be purſued. It tended only to excite contempt. We ſoothed, careſſed, and invited them to return to their loyalty and obedience. They ſcorned, ſpurned, and rejected our invitations. We were triflingly ſerious, and ſeriouſly trifling. A miſtaken moderation, a ruinous dilatorineſs, and a wavering inconſiſtency marked all our ſteps. From our procraſtination America gathered ſtrength and activity: from our diſſentions, diffidence, jealouſies, and party feuds, ſhe collected unanimity, confidence, zeal, and vigour. The Americans began with numbers of works; but they ſoon found them to be in moſt caſes both uſeleſs and unneceſſary, and learnt in a ſhort time by experience, that a reſiſtance, which is not con-

fined to particular ſpots, but is capable of operating every where, is beſt calculated for the purpoſes of a defenſive war. After taking poſſeſſion of Ticonderoga, and the lines without it; after clearing and fortifying Mount Independence, they found it impracticable to hold out againſt Genera. Burgoyne's army, even for a few days. But by adopting a different mode of defence, and acting on his line of penetration, they ſoon forced him to retreat, and even to lay down his arms. Lord Cornwallis and his army, without atchieving any thing material, were brought into a ſimilar predicament.

The ſagacious and inflexible Montmorency, by temporiſing and procraſtinating meaſures; by bridling the natural ardour and impetuoſity of his countrymen; by laying waſte a large tract of country, and diſmantling a number of ſubordinate and untenable poſts, ſaved France from deſtruction, and defeated the moſt formidable attack that ever was made upon her. Our ſituation, as an iſland,

iſland, affords more than every advantage, which he obtained by a moſt calamitous devaſtation of territory. Had he poſſeſſed a certain flexibility of diſpoſition, had he been capable of changing his reſolutions and conduct, with the variations in his circumſtances, he would have accompliſhed the entire ruin of Charles's army, and rendered even a retreat impoſſible. The battle of Haſtings will record the imprudence and precipitation of Harold. Poitiers and Creſſy proclaim the folly of France. The hiſtory of every country will furniſh innumerable inſtances to the ſame purpoſe.

It is obvious, however, that my intention and deſign in what has been advanced, is to eſtabliſh the following points:

1ſt, That in proſecuting an offenſive war, a deciſive battle ought to be early and eagerly ſought after; and in a defenſive one, induſtriouſly avoided.

2dly,

2dly, That it is inadviſeable, in every ſtate almoſt, to have a great part of its force ſtationary, and that in an iſland like Great-Britain, of which the coaſt is too extenſive to be fortified againſt a landing or invaſion, it would be highly impolitic to convert its whole active ſtrength into a ſtationary one, or to diſpoſe of the troops, we ought to act with in times of danger in the field, in a number of large fortreſſes or garriſons.

3dly, That, as it is impoſſible for this country to retain any foreign poſſeſſions, or carry on an extenſive commerce without a powerful and well-appointed navy, the keeping of it in a reſpectable condition ought to be one of the firſt and principal objects of our attention.

4thly, That, ſuppoſing even the ſuperiority at ſea to go from us into other hands, and our navy to dwindle into a ſtate of inſignificance, no power in Europe can reaſonably undertake the conqueſt of this iſland, unleſs the country itſelf is torn to pieces by inteſtine factions, and harbours in its own

boſom a ſtrong party ready to embrace the firſt opportunity of joining the invader's ſtandard.

5thly, That large and extenſive lines of fortifications, that bear no juſt proportion to the military eſtabliſhment of this country, are not only unneceſſary, but extremely dangerous.

6thly, That we ſhould have no works round our dock-yards, &c. but ſuch as are ſmall and compact, capable of being defended by an inconſiderable force, perfectly compleated, and kept in a conſtant ſtate of repair, and not left in that neglected, imperfect, and half-finiſhed ſtate, in which almoſt all the works in this country are at preſent.

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SECTION II.

Of the Detriment and Miſchief which may be occaſioned to Dockyards by Inveſtitures and Bombardments.

AT certain periods, when the ſpirit of innovation rages, there ariſe ſome ideas, which, eſcaping all inquiry, ſpread abroad with rapidity, and like a panic or phrenſy ſeize unaccountably on the minds and apprehenſions of mankind. That of deſtroying dock-yards by means of ſhells, red-hot ſhot, *&c.* is one of them. It has been ſuggeſted without reaſon, received without examination, and communicated, from one perſon to another, with all the emphatic repreſentations of danger, and the impoſing ſerioufneſs of conviction. But, if we bring it to the teſt of reaſon, and examine it with due attention, we ſhall ſoon be convinced that it is imaginary and groundleſs, and is only the offspring of

irreſolution and timidity. For the moſt eſſential, moſt expenſive, and principal parts of a dock-yard are its ſlips, docks, reſervoirs, canals, and the gates, ſluices, and other appendages belonging to them; together with the whole variety of its works and maſonry under ground, and againſt the ſea. And the reaſon is plain. Theſe are the produce and reſult of much time and trouble; and cannot, if once ruined, for a long time be replaced. Without them no operarion, either in the way of building or repairing veſſels, can well be carried on. Now no perſon, who has carefully examined his own ideas reſpecting this matter, will ſeriouſly venture to aſſert, that theſe are ſubject to deſtruction by any thing which an enemy can throw at, or into them, from a diſtance. For they cannot be deſtroyed, but either by ſpringing mines under them, or tearing them to pieces, and actually removing the materials of which they are compoſed. It is evident that red-hot ſhot cannot affect them; and ſhells, although they may knock out and ſplinter a few ſtones, and throw up ſome earth,

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can never do them any material damage. Beſides, if they are filled with water, the effect of the ſhells will be greatly diminiſhed. But it may be alleged, that the ſtores of a dock-yard are, in this reſpect, in a very different predicament from that of its permanent works. True, they are. And it is no leſs true, that, if ruined, they can be much more eaſily and ſpeedily replaced. It is only one claſs of them, however, ſuch as timber, ſails, cordage, pitch, and other inflammable ſubſtances, that are liable to be deſtroyed by an enemy's batteries, ſuppoſing even that no proper ſteps are taken for their preſervation by thoſe who have the management and direction of the yard. For they may be floated, or even ſunk, in ſuch a manner as to be readily raiſed again after the inveſtiture is over; a circumſtance that will render the firing or burning of them altogether impracticable. And if bomb-proofs are wanted for particular ſtores, it is an eaſy matter to run them up on the ſpurt of the occaſion, by placing logs with a pretty ſteep pitch againſt one another (which will ef-

fectually throw off any ſhells or carcaſes whatever), and ſcreening them againſt red-hot ſhot by ſurrounding them on thoſe parts that can be ſeen by the enemy, with earth, ſtones, bricks, and other materials that are not combuſtible, and are always to be found in ſuch places in ſufficient abundance for the purpoſe: beſides, there ſeems to be no good reaſon or neceſſity for having any greater quantity of them in dock-yards on the ſea-coaſt, than what is abſolutely neceſſary for immediate uſe and ſome occaſional ſupplies. Every redundance of the kind may, without inconvenience, be avoided. Our ſhips might be ſupplied, for a certain time, with every thing of this nature that they were likely to ſtand in need of, and the remainder might be ſent out of the enemy's reach to more inland *depôts*. Should there even happen to be a few veſſels on the ſtocks, they may, with a little contrivance, be effectually ſecured both againſt ſhot and ſhells. In ſhort, there are thouſands of ways in which a bombardment may be prevented from being ruinous to a dock-yard. And

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as to all thoſe ſtores that are not periſhable or inflammable, it is evident that it cannot materially injure them. Almoſt all theſe precautions may be taken too, and even carried into execution, during the time that the enemy neceſſarily conſumes in diſembarking his troops, in landing his guns, mortars, ſhot, ſhells, ammunition, *&c.* in tranſporting them to the proper ſpots, and completing his batteries. Now, it is manifeſt, that if he has the abſolute conqueſt of the iſland in view, the partial deſtruction of the combuſtible or periſhable ſtores in a dock-yard will not be an object to him; nay, it is highly probable that he will even wiſh to preſerve them, as by falling into his hands, they will enable him to furniſh his fleet with every article of the kind that is wanted, without being obliged to ſend, from time to time, to his own country for ſuch ſupplies. From the poſſeſſion of them he will derive very eſſential advantages. It will therefore be our buſineſs rather than his to deſtroy them, as we cannot either erect or man works of ſufficient ſtrength to hold

hold out long in any particular place againſt an army powerful and numerous enough for ſuch an undertaking. It is from armaments only of a ſubordinate, inferior, and ſecondary nature, which cannot remain long aſhore without meeting their own ruin, and which come not with an intention to conquer or ſubdue, but to haraſs, alarm, and diſtreſs, that miſchief is to be apprehended for our dock-yards. From ſuch however, if the proper and neceſſary precautions be attended to, I will venture to aſſert, that they will receive leſs damage than is annually occaſioned to them by the thefts and depredations committed in them by our own people, in ſpite of all the vigilance and care of the officers and other perſons who are intruſted with them. Till ſuch time then as a bombardment happens, we had better deſtroy every year ten times more than it actually can do when it does happen, than go to the prodigious expence of thoſe extenſive lines of fortifications propoſed by the preſent Maſter-General of the Ordnance.

Of the enormous Expence that will attend the Execution of thoſe Extenſive Lines of Field-fortifications, propoſed by his Grace the Duke of Richmond, to be erected round his Majeſty's Dock-yards at Portſmouth and Plymouth.

Chatham I take not formally into conſideration, as the folly of what has been already done there will, it is to be preſumed, furniſh a ſufficient caution to Maſters-General, in time to come, not even to think of doing much more at a poſt, which every military perſon of the leaſt ſenſe or diſcernment muſt, without ſcruple or heſitation, allow to be altogether incapable of being fortified. The large ſums expended there unprofitably ought likewiſe to be a ſerious and ſeaſonable warning to the Repreſentatives of the people, who are the conſtitutional guardians of the Public purſe, to take care how they open it for ſuch chimerical and viſionary ſchemes of ſecurity, as may be held out to them in future by any vain or romantic projector, that happens to

get into power by the miſtake, and for the diſtreſs of his country. In making theſe obſervations, however, I mean not to inſinuate, that the officer, who was entruſted with the erection of the works at that place, is cenſurable, as I am given to underſtand, that they never once met his approbation. It is not their execution which diſcovers no profeſſional incapacity, but deſign, which ſhews a great want of judgment, that I cenſure.

With regard to Portſmouth and Plymouth, the information which I have procured from the moſt unqueſtionable authority, reſpecting His Grace of Richmond's plans, is what follows:

	£.	s.	d.
That ſince he began to alter a work in the Goſport diviſion, commonly called Fort Monkton, there have been granted	21,000	0	0
viz. £. 11,000 for the year 1783, and £. 10,000 for 1784; and that for completing it there will be ſtill wanted	50,000	0	0

That

	£.	s.	d.
That on account of it, and a large pentagonal work intended to be erected near Stokes Bay Houſe; and a moraſs called Gomer Pond Lands, have been lately purchaſed to the amount of	11,757	0	0
That beſides theſe there muſt ſtill be purchaſed for the inundation, and two other large works, with ſome intermediate ſmall ones, to form a line of defence from thence acroſs to the harbour, at Frater Lake Lands, to the amount of	25,000	0	0
That the ſaid pentagonal work, if executed on the ſcale propoſed, will, by the moſt moderate eſtimate that can reaſonably be made for it, coſt at leaſt	135,000	0	0
That, ſuppoſing the other two capital points of this line to be made equally ſtrong with the ſaid poſition at the Bay Houſe, the works which muſt reſpectively occupy them, will coſt as follows, viz. the one at Frater Lake	160,000	0	0
And the other near Rowner Church at the ſaliant angle of the line, which is of courſe the tendereſt and weakeſt part of it	180,000	0	0
That for the intermediate works between theſe principal points, whenever they ſhall be erected, there cannot well be allowed leſs than	26,000	0	0

	£.	s.	d.
That for the ſluices, inundations, dams, and ditches for the ſame, têtes des ponts, bridges, and paſſages of communication, &c. there will be wanted	20,000	0	0
That the ordnance expence of the ſea wall, now erecting at Haſlar Hoſpital, will amount to	10,000	0	0
Total for the Goſport diviſion.	£.638,757	0	0

That at Plymouth there is likewiſe to be a line of defence formed from Mount Edgecombe to Tar Point, and occupied chiefly in like manner by three principal works; that the firſt of theſe on the left of the line is to be erected on Mount Edgecombe, with a ſmall work advanced from it, for the purpoſe of looking along and ſcouring a pretty deep ravine; that the ſecond or central work is to be near the King's Brewery; and that the third, on the right of the line, is to be conſtructed on Mr. Carey's pleaſure-ground and bowling-green; which, with the mutual communications between them neceſſary for rendering the defence advantageous and connected, &c. &c. will coſt at leaſt as muſt as the Goſport diviſion, viz. 638,757 • 0

That

	£.	s.	d.
That in the Portſmouth diviſion there is to be a large work erected near the middle of the preſent Portſea lines; that South-Sea Caſtle is to be pulled down, and a work conſtructed on ground a little way retired behind it; and that there are alterations and additions to be made at and near Cumberland Fort, &c. which together, independent of the ſums ſtill wanted for compleating the new works round *Common*, will coſt at leaſt	300,000	0	0
Total £. 1,577,514	0	0	

for the three diviſions.

Now if we ſeriouſly conſider, that eſtimates for works in general fall greatly ſhort of the actual expence of execution, we may reaſonably enough add to the preceding amount one half of itſelf; which addition will give us the enormous ſum of £2,366,271; a ſum greatly exceeding *that* which is ſufficient for building the whole navy of England. Extraordinary however as this eſtimate appears, I will confidently venture to aſſert, that it will but barely defray the expence of executing the aforeſaid works, unleſs the preſent Maſter General ſhould

ſhould greatly diminiſh the ſcale and dimenſions which he has hitherto uniformly propoſed for them, notwithſtanding any deluſive ſchemes of œconomy in workmanſhip that may from time to time be held out to the public. In confirmation of what I ſay, I need only produce as an inſtance, the new works round Common and the Dock-yard at Portſmouth. The firſt eſtimate of the expence neceſſary for erecting them, amounted only to forty thouſand pounds, and the higheſt that was made for them, to ſeventy. But, although there is not any one part of them as yet intirely finiſhed, although there is not a ſingle caſemate or barrack within them for the ſecurity and reception of the troops that muſt be employed in caſe of an attack in defending them, they have already coſt four times that ſum. If we likewiſe take into the account, His Grace's ſingular paſſion for alterations (which even his beſt friends muſt allow that he poſſeſſes in a very eminent degree); if we recollect, that he never engages in any enterprize without frequently changing his mind during the execution of it;

it; and that he is no leſs ſudden in quitting his reſolutions, than precipitate in forming them; we ſhall find great reaſon to conclude, that, ſhould Parliament even conſent to grant large ſums of money annually for the erection of theſe works, according to the ſcale and ſize propoſed, and he either happen to remain at the head of the ordnance, or get to it occaſionally, whilſt they are carrying on, the actual expence will conſiderably exceed that above-mentioned. Since he firſt was appointed Maſter General, he has repeatedly pledged himſelf in ſome meaſure, to fortify and ſecure both dock-yards for five hundred thouſand pounds, allowing two for Goſport, two for Plymouth, and one for Portſea iſland. In theſe relative proportions of the expence he is pretty correct, but in regard to the real amount of it, exceedingly miſtaken. In this particular, however, he only reſembles moſt other ſchemers, who, by way of recommending their plans, never fail to hold out fallacious and deluſive proſpects of expenditure, thinking, that if they are once approved of and received, they will after-

afterwards ſtand a fair chance of being executed. When the rage of innovation and novelty ſeizes on the imagination of a projector, reaſon is ſacrificed to fancy, love of country to vanity, and utility to whim. The propriety or impropriety of of expence is then entirely loſt ſight of, and every thing is forced to bow and give way to that pleaſure and delight, which the human mind naturally takes in furniſhing full ſcope for the exerciſe of its own paſſions and propenſities. And were it not for his known fickleneſs and verſatility, ſuch a fondneſs and partiality for fortifications muſt appear ſtrange and unaccountable to moſt people, when they conſider, that he uſed formerly to reprobate them in the moſt pointed terms he was maſter of, and in all the captious and empaſſioned language of oppoſition, unſcrupulouſly declaring, that there was no defence for this iſland but its navy. In making ſuch a declaration, however, he was no leſs in one extreme, than he is now in the other. For although it muſt certainly be acknowledged, that without a

ſuperior navy we neither can retain nor furniſh any permanent defence for our foreign iſlands and poſſeſſions, the ſecurity and protection of this kingdom itſelf muſt ultimately, or in caſes of the laſt extremity and dernier reſort, be derived from its own internal reſources, properly applied and regulated by the true principles of a defenſive war. That there exiſts any political reaſon or neceſſity for ſuch extenſive lines, as he has propoſed, I abſolutely deny. To me they even appear highly impolitic, as well as pregnant with danger and miſchief to this country. I wiſh not to inſinuate, however, that fortifications, even in Great-Britain, are altogether unneceſſary. I am in reality of a very different opinion; but I have ever thought, that we ought to have none that are not both of a moderate extent, and capable of being defended by an inconſiderable force. For it is ſurely prepoſterous, while theſe works that we already have, and which on an emergency we cannot even furniſh troops to man ſufficiently, are left in a neglected, imperfect, half-finiſhed, and almoſt ruinous ſtate, to pro-

poſe or adviſe the execution of others, on an infinitely larger and more expenſive ſcale. In finiſhing them properly, in repairing and putting them from time to time in a reſpectable poſture of defence, there is more than employment enough for all our engineers, that can be ſpared from foreign ſtations, and other neceſſary and uſeful duty.

The eſtabliſhment of the engineer-corps, indeed, it muſt be confeſſed, has always been found in experience to be by far too ſmall for that of the army. Whence it has been the practice on every campaign, to take numbers of officers from the line to act as aſſiſtants, to the no ſmall prejudice and detriment of the ſervice. For, though ſome of thoſe gentlemen, that have been thus employed, are very well qualified, it cannot be denied, that they are far from being generally ſo. The late reduction of acting engineers, from ſeventy-five to ſixty-one, is not therefore altogether judicious, eſpecially as they occaſion

to

to the Public an expence, comparatively ſpeaking, but very inconſiderable. It may, perhaps, be alleged, that in time of war the eſtabliſhment may eaſily be augmented. True, it may. But ſuch a temporary augmentation cannot remedy the inconvenience I have mentioned. For officers, unleſs they poſſeſs very great and uncommon abilities indeed, cannot, in a profeſſional corps, be prepared immediately for acting with advantage to their country. They muſt undergo a ſort of probation, and by degrees acquire that knowledge, which is requiſite for rendering them ſerviceable in the field, and ſkilful in conſtruction.

From the ſtatement of the expence, given above, for his Grace's extenſive lines of fortifications it clearly appears, that at the rate of fifty thouſand pounds *per annum*, they will hardly be completed in forty-ſeven years. The preſent race or generation of men then cannot ſee them finiſhed. One half of them will want repairs, before the other can be erected. That ſo large an annual expenditure on them, however, for ſuch a

period of years, will be uniformly aſſented to by the Houſe of Commons, is a ſuppoſition that can ſcarcely be made. It is no difficult matter, therefore, to predict their fate, if the preſent rulers in this country ſhould even agree to their erection; and relying implicitly on his Grace's judgment for their political expedience or propriety, go regularly to Parliament, during their own continuance in office, for the ſupplies that will be neceſſary for carrying them on. Succeeding Adminiſtrations, and Maſters Generals, will probably, nay certainly, view them in a very different light; and conceiving them to be not only unneceſſary but dangerous, will, after ſome hundred thouſand pounds ſhall be fooliſhly expended, put a ſtop to their progreſs, and leave them to go intirely to ruin and decay. And, perhaps, ſome ages hence, when the memory of an undertaking ſo ridiculous ſhall be obliterated, their decayed jim-crack curioſities may furniſh amuſement and ſpeculation to antiquaries. No ſenſible or wiſe man will either adviſe or attempt the execution of a

project,

project, that requires half a century almoſt for its completion, till it is previouſly well aſcertained that the minds of his countrymen in general are deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe both of its neceſſity and advantages. This is far from being the caſe, however, with his ſchemes of fortifying. The Public does not entertain ſuch favourable impreſſions of them. The ſentiments of the intelligent, and the prejudices of the ignorant, are collectively againſt them. What then can induce him to propoſe or bring them forward with ſo much anxiety and earneſtneſs? He is poſſibly in the predicament of thoſe ſchemers and pretended reformers, who flatter themſelves, that, provided they only innovate and make alterations, the world will give them credit for improvement and reformation. But what is the uſe of his practiſing, in trifles, a rigorous and oppreſſive ſyſtem of œconomy, that tends only to diſtreſs individuals, without benefiting the State, whilſt, at the ſame time, he is expending thouſands unprofitably; and is ſeriouſly contriving to engage this kingdom in projects,

which her finances, at preſent, are not equal to; and which, ſo far from ever becoming advantageous to her, if even executed, are manifeſtly calculated for accelerating her deſtruction. To be at once both prodigal and parſimonious in the extreme, ſurely argues a ſingularity of diſpoſition, and a ſtriking ſpecies of inconſiſtency. And it will be difficult to account for the co-exiſtence of two ſuch oppoſite qualities in the ſame perſon, otherwiſe than by that powerful influence which the tempers, propenſities, fears, and apprehenſions of individuals, are known to have generally on their conduct and opinions. Thus, for inſtance, the daring, the raſh and impetuous, ſpurning the controul of reaſon, are apt to deſpiſe all precautions, and to deem them unneceſſary; whereas the timid, the fearful, and irreſolute mind, has always diſtorted and microſcopic proſpects of danger and attack, and conſequently never fails to magnify both the neceſſity and modes of defence, beyond all truth and due proportion. But a ſteady and prudent courage, guided by the

the dictates of ſound ſenſe and reaſon, makes the neceſſary preparations for ſecurity, without being biaſſed or led into extremes, either by raſhneſs or timidity.

Should his Grace, however, be even ſucceſsful enough to obtain the ſanction of Parliament, to lines of ſuch an immoderate and prepoſterous extent, it is to be hoped, that the Engineers appointed to meet as a committee in the Tower, on certain days every week, for the examination of plans, will at leaſt diſcover ſome regard for their country (as I doubt not that they wiſh her well), and inſtead of lending their approbation to ſuch large and extenſive works as he propoſes, recommend others on a ſmaller and much leſs expenſive ſcale. The political reaſons for and againſt their erection, as adviſeable or otherwiſe, will not, I am ſenſible, come naturally under their conſideration; but their magnitudes, as well as the modes and expence of erecting them, moſt undoubtedly will. I am confident, that they will readily

readily pardon me for venturing, on the preſent occaſion, to ſuggeſt to them one circumſtance, which is well deſerving of their attention, and muſt, I ſuppoſe, have already occurred to them as profeſſional men. It is this:—In a work, which is to ſtand an attack by itſelf, ſingly and unſupported, it is neceſſary to have large and ſtrong flanks, ſince it is almoſt impoſſible for an enemy, till the flanking defences are deſtroyed, to approach the body of the place. But with regard to chains of fortifications that communicate, co operate with, and furniſh mutual protection and aſſiſtance to one another, the caſe is widely different. For on ſuch continuations of defence, the intire fronts of one work are, in reality, flanks to thoſe of another. And, as no particnlar one, in ſuch a line, can be embraced without the reſt, till the line itſelf is penetrated, and the communication between them interrupted, it is unneceſſary for it to have any larger flanks than what are juſt ſufficient for taking off dead parts, ſcouring the ditch, preventing a ſurpriſe, and defeating ſudden aſſaults, unleſs

unleſs it happens to be placed within a ſmall ſaliant angle, like the work propoſed to be erected near Rowner church, which will occupy one not differing much from that of a pentagon. The cuſtomary lengths of the perpendiculars, particularly to thoſe ſides that cloſe it in the rear, may therefore be greatly diminiſhed without inconvenience; which will very much increaſe its interior area, whilſt it decreaſes the extent of parapet, and, of courſe, conſiderably leſſens the expence.

It is likewiſe currently reported, not only amongſt profeſſional people, but alſo officers of the line, that an affection or partiality for Montalembert's new ſyſtem, called *La Fortification perpendiculaire*, which has not even plauſibility to recommend it, and is no more than a combination of principles radically and fundamentally abſurd, has led him to fix on ridiculous *Caponiers*, and an infinitely greater number of expenſive caſemates, than is neceſſary. I am perſuaded, however, that the committee of engineers will not diſplay any particular fondneſs for

novelty in their profeſſion, or adviſe the adoption of a mode of fortifying, which has never been put to the teſt, or brought into actual trial, in preference to thoſe, that have ariſen out of time, experience, and obſervation. For it is no leſs unfair to compare with his, Vauban's ſyſtem, and others that have received, as it were, the ſanction of ages, and been carried into execution in almoſt every country in Europe, than it would be to compare a living man to a dead ſtatue, which has never once tried its ſtrength in real action.

SECTION IV.

Obſervations on the Attack and Defence of the aforeſaid Lines, on the Proportion which the Number of Troops requiſite for defending them, bears to the Military Eſtabliſhment of this Country; and on the probable Conſequences of erecting them, ſhould an Invaſion actually take place.

LET us then begin with Plymouth, and afterwards take Goſport and Portſmouth together, as they are naturally connected.

With regard to Mount Edgecombe or Maker Side, it muſt be allowed by every perſon who has examined the ground with a military eye, that we cannot prevent an enemy from landing at a diſtance from the propoſed line, rather convenient than otherwiſe for his purpoſe, provided that he come with only double our numbers or force. We dare not even advance to diſ-

pute the matter with him, without throwing ourſelves into an aukward ſituation, turning our backs on a creek, and running the riſk of having our return to our own works cut off. The advanced fort which His Grace talked of ſome time ago, could not, if even erected, remove this evil or inconvenience: For the enemy might land in the rear of it, and after getting poſſeſſion of it (as he certainly would do ſoon), convert it to his own advantage. It muſt alſo be acknowledged, that after he has diſembarked his troops, and effected a landing, he may with very little trouble ſecure his rear completely againſt any attempts from the country, whilſt he proceeds with his attack on our line of forts running acroſs from Mount Edgecombe to Tar Point. That there are great and manifeſt diſadvantages attending the relative poſitions of theſe works, is a truth that cannot poſſibly be denied: For they are ſeparated by creeks, and can hardly have any communication but by bridges, and theſe too liable to be annoyed by the enemy. They conſequently cannot furniſh a mutual ſupport or pro-

tection to one another either ſpeedily or effectually. There muſt, therefore, be a large body of troops behind each of them, ready to act as circumſtances may require, particularly on Mount Edgecombe; ſince it is obvious, that ſhould the left of the line once fall into his hands, the reſt of it ſoon would of courſe. The number of men, however, neceſſary for its defence, will depend in a great meaſure on the ſtrength of the attacking army. Leſs than fifteen thouſand cannot reaſonably be allotted for this purpoſe, ſhould the enemy appear with thirty-five or forty before it. His getting poſſeſſion of it will ſave him an immenſe deal of trouble, ſince it is exactly the line on the Maker Side that he muſt form, to enable him to remain in Plymouth with ſafety, were he actually maſter of the harbour. In making it therefore at a great expence, we are playing both a high and a dangerous game.

As to the ſide on which Plymouth, the dock-yard, *&c.* ſtand, it muſt certainly be admitted, that it is in reality almoſt not fortifiable.

fortifiable. For the ground riſes gradually from it to Dart-moor, and furniſhes the attacker with every poſſible ſort of advantage, unleſs there be a body of troops to haraſs and annoy his rear, from a poſition ſtill more advantageous than that he acts from. In order to afford it any tolerable degree of protection, it would be neceſſary to occupy an extent of almoſt five miles, from the Tamar to that branch of the ſea which runs up to the Three-mile-bridge, with a line of works, that, when erected, would require twenty-five thouſand men, at leaſt, to defend them. This, with the line above-mentioned on the Maker Side, are exactly what an enemy, after getting poſſeſſion of Plymouth, muſt form, to enable him to remain in it with ſafety. There is one circumſtance, however, attending them, that greatly increaſes the difficulty of their defence, which is this, that being ſeparated by creeks, rivers, and the ſea, they cannot, in caſe of an attack, effectually ſupport or aſſiſt each other. A ſituation in this reſpect more ineligible, or with more broken and interrupted communica-

munications, can hardly be conceived. That General Lloyd, who has written and reaſoned very much like a ſoldier, was exactly of the ſame opinion, is evident. For, in ſpeaking of this poſt, he ſays: " To re-
" main there with any ſafety, he (the ene-
" my) muſt occupy and fortify Mount
" Edgecombe, and the ground behind the
" King's Brewhouſe, as well as all the
" ground between the Tamar and that
" branch of the ſea which runs under Mr.
" Parker's garden to the bridge, at the
" three-mile ſtone coming to London. He
" ſhould, moreover, have a body of troops
" in Mr. Parker's ground. Forty or fifty
" thouſand men would not be ſufficient for
" the purpoſe, becauſe theſe being ſeparated
" by the ſea and the Tamar, could not, in
" in caſe of an attack, ſupport each other;
" and if only one of them is defeated, the
" others muſt fall ſucceſſively and in a very
" ſhort time." The principal ſecurity of the Plymouth ſide conſiſts in this, that an enemy cannot eaſily get to it but through our own negligence, unſkilfulneſs, and inactivity. For he muſt make a very conſiderable

ſiderable detour, and march under a variety of difficulties, through a certain tract of country very difficult and mountainous, and in which there is not a ſingle ſpot ſufficiently extenſive for forming in, or for his availing himſelf of his ſuperiority in numbers. Half the force requiſite for defending any line of works that can poſſibly be made for it, properly managed and diſpoſed of, would ruin his army, however numerous, before he could reach the place. On ſuch an occaſion then, the moſt ſenſible method of acting for us would be, to withdraw from Plymouth the greateſt part of the troops allotted for its defence, and with them oppoſe his progreſs towards it, by occupying ſucceſſively, as incidents might require, the various poſts beſt calculated for annoying both the front and flanks of his line of march, as well as the paſſes through which he muſt either neceſſarily advance or retire. If we acted judiciouſly, his numbers would ſtand him in but little ſtead, and it would be impoſſible for us to fail of ſucceſs. In ſuch circumſtances, an army, however powerful, could not advance far without

meeting

meeting its deſtruction. If this mode of defence, which indeed is the only one that is practicable, be then adopted for it, nine or ten thouſand men will keep it perfectly ſecure. An attempt to defend it by means of fortifications would, on our part, be the very height of madneſs. For, although an inconſiderable force, properly made uſe of, will prevent an invading army from ever appearing before it; yet it muſt certainly be allowed, that if an enemy once gets there, it is not poſſible for us to protect it, without ſuch an extenſive line of works, and great number of troops, as I have mentioned. And ſuch a body of men, it will be utterly impoſſible for us to furniſh, or ſpare for it, from other indiſpenſible ſervices, till the military eſtabliſhment of this country be quadruple, or at leaſt triple, what it ever has been hitherto. The Maker Side is almoſt equally objectionable on the ſame account, and is ſtill more pregnant with danger. For an enemy can get to it with his army without either riſk or difficulty, and if it is not properly manned, eaſily becomes maſter of it, and without

either expence or labour, takes immediate poſſeſſion of one of thoſe principal barriers that are abſolutely neceſſary for enabling him to remain at Plymouth with his fleet and troops in ſecurity. The greateſt inconvenience attending it, however, does not lie in this, that it is utterly impracticable for us to man it ſufficiently. The enormous expence of its erection will exceed, beyond all ratio and proportion, the amount of the damage that could be occaſioned to the dock-yard by a bombardment. The object is not adequate to the expenditure. For the timber belonging to it may be all floated, or placed where red-hot ſhot cannot touch it. And there ſeems to be no good reaſon why ſtorehouſes ſhould not be built, as they certainly might, and on ſpots too, convenient enough for water-carriage, to receive all the combuſtible, or inflammable ſtores and materials, entirely out of the reach of ſhot and ſhells from the oppoſite ſide; a precaution, which would render the enemy's attack from that quarter uſeleſs and nugatory. The expence of erecting them, if compared to that of the other,

will

will be found to be altogether trifling. From what has been ſaid, it appears then, that the works propoſed to be erected at this poſt, by the preſent Maſter General of the Ordnance, are not only expenſive beyond meaſure, and diſproportionate to the military eſtabliſhment of Great Britain, which, it is likely, will not be greater in time to come than it has been heretofore, eſpecially after ſo recent a loſs of territory and dominion, but are alſo, in reality, much more calculated for our enemy's intereſts and ſecurity than our own. Beſides, before they can be half finiſhed, we ſhall probably be involved in another war. Their imperfect ſtate will be an abſolute invitation to him to come and take poſſeſſion of them, and thus reap all the fruits or advantages of our labour, trouble, and expence, while we ſhall have the mortification to find, that we have only toiled and exhauſted our treaſury in erecting ſtrong holds for our foes. It ought likewiſe to be ſeriouſly conſidered, that we hazard a great deal by throwing a conſiderable, or principal part of our force into any one particular

place, eſpecially on the ſea-coaſt. For, if the poſt happens to be taken, the troops alſo employed in defending it (as is indeed commonly the caſe) fall naturally at the ſame time into the enemy's hands. And when we are coping with a foe that can command as many almoſt as he chooſes, ſuch a diminution of national ſtrength in the very hour of diſtreſs, muſt tend greatly to bring the ſafety of the ſtate itſelf into immediate danger, by depriving us of an eſſential part of that force, which we ought ſtudiouſly to preſerve and employ in oppoſing his progreſs into the heart of the country. When an invaſion takes place that threatens the conqueſt of the kingdom, we ſhould conceive ourſelves to be fighting not for any inferior individual object, but for the whole community at large, and the preſervation of the realm. It is not for any ſubordinate conſideration, it is not on account of this or that dock-yard, this or that poſt, that we ought to run any material riſk. An obſtinate reſiſtance, in any particular ſpot or ſpots, that may lead to a general action, or expoſe us even to the chance

chance of a diſaſter, we muſt carefully and induſtriouſly avoid. A temporiſing procraſtinating ſyſtem of defence, which ſeizes and avails itſelf of every advantage that the country naturally affords, without coming to any thing deciſive, will ſave us, and ſoon ruin our enemies. It is by ſuch an oppoſition alone, properly regulated and conducted, and not by large and extenſive works, that England is, in caſes of extreme danger, to be protected. For if we even ſuppoſe the French, who muſt be allowed to have a ſufficiency of troops almoſt for any military purpoſe or enterpriſe whatever, to be in poſſeſſion of Plymouth, and both the lines above-mentioned in a complete and perfect ſtate, we muſt not from thence infer, that they have thereby obtained any ſuperiority or advantage that can really decide the fate of the kingdom. During their continuance in it they may, to be ſure, if indiſputably maſters at ſea, by means of their fleet and parties, or detachments from their army, ravage the whole coaſt of England, and ſpread perpetual and conſtant alarms. But, although the navigation from it to

France is but ſhort and not very precarious, they could not remain there long with a large force depending on uncertain ſupplies from their ſhipping. To continue poſſeſſed of it for any conſiderable length of time, the greateſt part of them muſt advance and occupy ſome poſition which commands a tract or diſtrict of country ſufficient for ſupplying them with ſubſiſtence in abundance. There is no ſpot, however, calculated for this purpoſe, and for keeping open likewiſe a communication with the ſea, nearer than Hall-down, as General Lloyd has very ſenſibly obſerved. And it will argue an unaccountable degree of neglect and inactivity in us, to permit them ever to penetrate half ſo far.

As to the intended line of fortifications in the Goſport diviſion, it muſt be acknowledged, even by the noble Duke who is the propoſer of it, that when finiſhed, it will furniſh no ſort of protection whatever to our ſhips in the harbour, but only prevent the enemy from throwing red-hot ſhot and ſhells from that ſide into the dock-yard.

yard. For the point of land beyond Bedinham Lake looks right along the channel called Fareham Lake, in which are all the moorings for the large veſſels, quite down to Portſmouth and the dock-yards, and is only a few hundred yards diſtant from ſome of them, that extend as far up as the right of the line, at the ſmall creek called Frater Lake. And the fire from this point throughout the whole of the ſaid extent, is croſſed in ſmall angles, by that from the lower Bedinham Point. It would be impoſſible, therefore, for a veſſel to remain in any one part whatever of the ſaid Lake for only twenty four hours after the enemy is in poſſeſſion of this ground, without being totally ruined and deſtroyed. Beſides the water that is in it at all ſtates of the tide, would ſerve as a conductor to ever ſhot or ſhell fired with a ſmall angle of elevation, and give it effect. But this is not all: Their fire likewiſe croſſes all that part of the Portcheſter Lake, in which are the moorings for the ſmaller veſſels and frigates, nearly at right angles. There may alſo be a fire acroſs both theſe

lakes

lakes from Portcheſter Caſtle, and all the ground lying to the weſt of it, as far as Wicker. It is manifeſt then, that this line, when completed, will not be able to afford any effectual protection to our ſhipping. To make it anſwer this purpoſe, and ſecure the harbour, it would be neceſſary to terminate its right on the ground in front of Bedinham, and to occupy the Portcheſter-Side very ſtrongly. But a line ſo long, ſo broken, and interrupted, as theſe taken together form, would be attended in its erection with ſuch an immenſe expence, and require ſuch a number of troops for its defence againſt a powerful invading army, that I may venture to ſay, it never will be executed, or even ſeriouſly thought of: For ſurely no individual that does not wiſh the ruin of this country can ever be ſo mad or ſenſeleſs as to adviſe it. His Grace, indeed, himſelf, I am informed, entirely gives up the idea of protecting the harbour, and only propoſes by his line, to prevent red-hot ſhot and ſhells from being thrown into the dock-yard. It does not by any means, however, appear clear to me, that

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when erected, it will operate as ſuch a prevention. That it cannot indeed completely, is evident: For, ſhould the enemy float ſome ſea-mortars near Portcheſter Caſtle, at the diſtance only of two miles from the dock-yard, which he certainly may do without inconvenience, whenever he ſhall come to attack us with a great force, he will be able to throw as many ſhells into it as he chooſes, ſince ſuch mortars, with proper charges of powder, will give conſiderably longer ranges than are wanted for this purpoſe. Our ſhips, at all events, muſt run to ſome other place for ſhelter and ſecurity: And reſpecting the preſervation of the periſhable or combuſtible ſtores and materials in the yard from partial deſtruction, it muſt unqueſtionably be allowed, that it is not in any degree adequate to the prodigious expenditure that will unavoidably be occaſioned by the making of the lines, which, even when finiſhed, it is evident, will not produce this ſalutary effect. They may be perfectly ſecured, however, at an infinitely leſs expence; for the timber might be all floated, as a great part of it indeed is now.

And I ſee no good reaſon, why there ſhould not be ſtore-houſes built for receiving the other inflammable materials in Portſea Iſland, on a ſpot or ſpots altogether out of the reach of the enemy's ſhot and ſhells from every quarter. Should ſuch a meaſure be adopted, it will reduce our defences for this poſt to that iſland alone, and ſave us the whole expenditure that will accompany our carrying of his Grace's plans for the Goſport diviſion into execution. But it is not the enormous expence which will neceſſarily attend the execution of this line, that ought to alarm us moſt, or has the beſt claim to our ſerious conſideration and attention. Let us, therefore, examine it in other reſpects: From Blockhouſe Fort to Frater Lake, round by Fort Monckton, the Bay-houſe and Rowner Church is its extent, which is about ſix miles. As to the number of troops requiſite for its defence againſt an attacking army of conſiderable ſtrength, it muſt be admitted, that fewer than two hundred and fifty cannot reaſonably be allotted for Blockhouſe Fort and the work at Haſlar Hoſpital, five hundred for Fort Monck-

Monckton, eight hundred for the propoſed pentagonal work at Stoke's Bay-houſe, nine hundred for that intended to be erected at Frater Lake, a thouſand for the one near Rowner Church, in the ſaliant angle of the line, and five hundred for the ſmaller intermediate works. Theſe together amount to three thouſand nine hundred and fifty. Now, in order to defend them properly, it would be neceſſary to relieve theſe troops once in forty-eight hours, from the ſtrong corps that muſt be ſtationed in their rear ready to watch the motions of the enemy, prevent his penetration through the intervals, and oppoſe him as circumſtances may require. For theſe reliefs then, which will both excite an emulation amongſt them, and prevent that diminution of ſpirit and courage, which is always occaſioned by people's being ſhut up long in any one place, and obliged to act defenſively, and for other uſeful and unavoidable duties, it will be abſolutely neceſſary to have twice as many men as there are in the works, always in readineſs behind them. There will be wanted then, about twelve thouſand

men for the defence of the Goſport line, if it ſhould be executed according to his Grace's ideas, and about ten thouſand for the iſland of Portſea. On his ſcale of defence, therefore, forty-ſeven or fifty thouſand troops will barely ſuffice for defending Portſmouth and Plymouth. But this is a number that the military eſtabliſhment of this country never can ſupply for the purpoſe. When Lord Townſhend* (as I have been told), ſomewhat ſurpriſed and aſtoniſhed at the prodigious magnitude of his Grace's plans for fortifying theſe two poſts, with great propriety aſked the late Commander in Chief, how many, in caſe of an attack, he could allow for them; received for anſwer, that more than eight thouſand for each, or ten at the very utmoſt, could not poſſibly be furniſhed. Sixteen or twenty thouſand, however, differ very widely from the fifty or ſixty thouſand that

* As Lord Townſhend was removed from the Ordnance, before he had arranged or adopted a plan of defence and protection for our docks, &c. I cannot ſpeak with any degree of preciſion of his Lordſhip's ideas on the ſubject.

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will be wanted, ſhould his ſchemes be all carried into execution. Sir William Howe, Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance, when he was interrogated by the ſame nobleman reſpecting them, and aſked for his opinion in regard to ſo many large works, and ſuch extenſive lines, made nearly the following reply:

"I will give you the ſame anſwer to "this queſtion, that I formerly gave to "the Duke of Richmond, as I am equally "convinced with your Lordſhip, that if "we cannot find a ſufficiency of troops for "manning them completely, without too "great a diminution of our active force, "we are much better without them alto-"gether."

This is exactly the light in which every perſon, who only poſſeſſes mediocrity of underſtanding, and an ordinary ſhare of diſcernment, muſt view them, unleſs he is either influenced and biaſed by prejudices, or is led, by an influence of a different nature, to be anxious about the carrying on

of ſome deſign, at the expence, and to the detriment of his country. Thoſe who are fooliſh enough to aſſert, that ſuch an extenſive line as the one propoſed for the Goſport diviſion, can be defended by an inconſiderable force, would do well to pay ſome attention to the reſemblance which the part of it that extends from the Bay-houſe to Frater Lake, bears to the one which was occupied at the battle of Fontenoy, by the French army under the command of Mareſchal Saxe, the ableſt general of the age he lived in. The angle formed by the village of that name, with Anthoin on the right, and the wood of Barry on the left, differs but little from the one which is formed by Rowner church with Frater Lake and Stoke's Bay-houſe; and the diſtances between thoſe capital points in their line fall ſhort, reſpectively, of the fronts extending between theſe in ours, ſome hundred yards; a circumſtance which was for them, and is againſt us. Saxe, however, although he had almoſt five times as many men within his line as he that attacked it, although he

he had very judiciouſly thrown up three redoubts near Fontenoy, the ſaliant and conſequently tendereſt part of it, found it impracticable to prevent our troops from penetrating it at that place, and almoſt completely cutting his army in two; which we certainly ſhould have done, had he not ſupplied the weakneſs and defects of ſuch a line, by his own good management and ſkill, in drawing his brigades from the left wing to ſupport the centre. Nothing, on the one hand, is ſo difficult or diſadvantageous, as to defend a ſaliant angle which is embraced, or, on the other, ſo eaſy and advantageous, as to attack from a re-entering angle which embraces. This is a doctrine well underſtood by thoſe who have had much practice in the croſſing of rivers. The reaſon indeed is plain. When the angle which an enemy embraces, does not exceed that of a hexagon, he can bring his fire to croſs in the rear of, and almoſt cloſe to the work that occupies it. And whenever he does ſo, he can proceed with his attacks on it ſucceſsfully, and in ſecurity; whilſt it is impoſſible for

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any troops either to advance or remain near it for its protection, otherwiſe than under cover, without expoſing themſelves to inevitable deſtruction. This is preciſely the caſe with the ſaliant point of that part of the Goſport line I have been mentioning. For the enemy can embrace any fort placed near it, with the angle only of a pentagon, and command the approaches to it in the rear, almoſt as effectually as in the front. It muſt therefore not only be occupied by a very ſtrong work, but likewiſe have the ſmaller intermediate ones thrown up nearer to it than the right and left of the line, in order to counterballance this advantage on the ſide of the aſſailants as much as poſſible. It even appears doubtful to me, whether it will not be both adviſable and neceſſary to have a double line of ſmall works for ſome diſtance on each ſide of it. This point, however, is alſo weak in other reſpects. For ſhould the enemy land, and fix himſelf near Lee or Court Barn, off from which there is a good and ſecure road for ſhipping, entirely out of the reach of our ſhot

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or ſhells, he will find himſelf nearer to it than any other part of the line. From thence he can advance, and approach almoſt quite cloſe to it in twenty-four hours with ſafety, whilſt, without the leaſt difficulty, he renders it impoſſible for us to annoy him from our left. The ground right oppoſite to the ſpot on which the work propoſed for it is intended to be erected, and ſeparated from it only by the ſmall rivulet that croſſes the road at Rowner, and runs along to the moraſs, is alſo very favourable for an attack, although it may in ſome meaſure be looked along, and ſcoured by a fire from the church-yard, and certain ſpots near it, which muſt be occupied. He may likewiſe turn our left at Gomer Ponet with his fleet, as often as he chooſes, and draw our attention along Stoke's Bay, all the way down to Fort Monkton. He alſo enjoys another great advantage; which is this, that he can counterfeit various attacks, on different parts of the line, and conceal his real intentions, whilſt he ſeizes the moſt favourable moment for penetrating it at ſome

other place, and ſevering our defences. This once done effectually, the ſeveral works forming it will fall ſucceſſively, and in a very ſhort time, into his hands.

The idea, indeed, of defending an extenſive line of forts, that are ſeparate and diſtant from one another, without a conſiderable army behind them, is altogether ludicrous and abſurd. An enemy's getting poſſeſſion, however, of this line, when once erected, would be attended with ſuch terrible and dreadful conſequences to this kingdom, that I cannot even think of it without horror. For thoſe who have not a communication with Portſmouth by water, there are only two ways to it; one of which is by Portſea Bridge, and the other by Goſport. General Lloyd has very juſtly obſerved, that Portſea lines are againſt us, as they form a barrier for the enemy, the moment he gets upon the iſland, againſt the country on the ſide of Ports-down. When the large work which his Grace propoſes to erect near the middle of them, ſhall be finiſhed, they

they will be ſtill more ſo. Had the propoſed line for the Goſport diviſion been erected when he wrote, he certainly would have made a ſimilar obſervation reſpecting it, and in much ſtronger terms. It is not only againſt us, like the other, but is much more difficult to be defended, and is exceedingly dangerous and alarming. For, taken with the other, it ſeems chiefly calculated for enabling an enemy, after he once gets poſſeſſion of them, to hold the principal poſt and harbour in this country, without running any riſk, or expoſing himſelf to the ſmalleſt degree of danger, as long as he is maſter at ſea, in ſpite of any attempts that we could poſſibly make to diſlodge him. Could he fix himſelf in the Iſle of Wight ſo effectually as to command it, and obtain from it ſubſiſtence in abundance for his troops, and likewiſe have a ſecure and commodious road or harbour for his ſhipping, he might in a ſhort time ruin our trade, and almoſt annihilate the commercial intereſts of this nation. But this he never will be able to do, whilſt we can maintain and keep up a con-

ſtant and ſpeedy communication with the north-ſide of the iſland, by being maſters of Spithead. For it muſt be acknowledged, that (as General Lloyd very ſenſibly obſerves) the diſembarkation, or landing of an army on the ſouth-ſide of it, would be extremely difficult, even when there is not any reſiſtance or oppoſition, and altogether impracticable when there is, and that it is impoſſible for a fleet, or even a ſingle veſſel to anchor off from any part of it for twenty-four hours, without throwing itſelf into the way of certain deſtruction, and running the utmoſt riſk of periſhing. To retain poſſeſſion of the Iſle of Wight, therefore, for any conſiderable length of time, he muſt command the navigation quite round it, and particularly on the north-ſide for the anchorage of his ſhipping. Now, it is manifeſt, that, while we have the command of Portſea iſland, and the Goſport ſide, we can always continue to render it impoſſible for his fleet to remain long at Spithead, or on the north-ſide of the Iſle of Wight, in ſafety. But let us only ſuppoſe him in poſſeſſion of Portſmouth, and the

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line propoſed by the preſent Maſter General of the Ordnance for the Goſport diviſion, and all theſe difficulties vaniſh immediately. Spithead, St. Helens, the Iſle itſelf, and the entire navigation round it, become the natural appendages of ſuch a poſſeſſion. He inſtantly converts Portſea lines, and thoſe intended for Goſport, into lines of circumvallation againſt the country, deſpiſing our feeble attacks, and enjoying himſelf in comfort and ſecurity, having a ſufficiency of troops for the defence of works which we cannot pretend to man even indifferently. He has, at once, excellent roads for his ſhipping, and plenty of proviſions for his army, without being under the diſagreeable neceſſity of advancing into the country, or expoſing himſelf even to the chance of a misfortune. Thus circumſtanced, and riding triumphantly at ſea, he annihilates our trade, and forces us into an acquieſcence with any terms he chooſes to dictate. The deſtruction of our commerce, however, is not the only calamity that may be occaſioned to us by his fixing of himſelf in ſuch a poſition. He would be at a moderate

moderate and convenient diſtance from the metropolis, without being ſurrounded, as at Plymouth, by a difficult and mountainous country, and having it in his power to receive ſupplies of troops occaſionally from France, equal almoſt to any military purpoſe whatever, would be able to watch and embrace every favourable opportunity of attacking us with advantage in our weakeſt moments, when we might happen to be torn to pieces by internal diſſentions and inſurrections, or to labour under any particular misfortune, and of reducing us into complete ſubjection.

What are the inferences then which we muſt naturally draw from all that has been ſaid? Plainly theſe:

1ſt, That we ought, without ſcruple or heſitation, to diſcountenance and reject his Grace's plans of fortification for Portſmouth and Plymouth, as pregnant with miſchief and ruin to this country. God forbid, that I ſhould even allege, that, as a ſubject both of France and England, he is

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at all influenced in this buſineſs by our natural foes. But, were he actually penſioned by them for the purpoſe of betraying this iſland into their hands, he ſurely could not take a more effectual method of doing it, than by erecting theſe very lines of defence.

2dly, That they are altogether diſproportionate, and unſuitable to the military eſtabliſhment of Great Britain, which is not likely, after ſo great a loſs of territory, to be greater in time to come than it hitherto has been. I mean not, however, that it ought to be reduced lower than it is at preſent. I am really of opinion, that it ought not, if we wiſh it to bear any juſt proportion to the exigencies of the State. And if any reduction is meant to take place, it ſhould be in men and not in regiments, ſince nothing tends ſo effectually to render raw recruits ſoon ſoldiers, as their incorporation into old and eſtabliſhed corps.

3dly, That the expence which would attend their erection, is ſuch as the finances of

of this country, in her preſent diſtreſſed ſituation, are not equal to, unleſs additional burdens be laid on the ſubject, already groaning under a load of taxes.

And, 4thly; That it is highly prepoſterous and abſurd, to propoſe new works on a much more extenſive ſcale than any perſon in this country ever thought of before, while no attention whatever almoſt is paid to thoſe that we have already begun and executed. Thus Portſea lines, for inſtance, are totally neglected. The new works round the common are not as yet more than two-thirds finiſhed, if barracks are to be built, and caſemates, *&c.* made within them. They certainly terminate on the left by a great deal too near the dock-yard, as General Lloyd has very juſtly obſerved, and their erection was undoubtedly one of the moſt fooliſh things that the Parliament of Great Britain ever aſſented to. For works might have been erected at a tenth part of the expence which they have occaſioned already, that would anſwer the purpoſe of protecting it, much better than they

do. However as they have been carried on ſo far, they ought to be finiſhed. And it muſt be allowed, that their execution cannot by any means be ſo much found fault with as the deſign. The revetements of the old works round Portſmouth are moſtly mouldering away apace, and going into decay, having, through ſome unaccountable piece of ignorance or inattention, been made with ſtones that do not ſtand the weather. At South Sea Caſtle, which is now propoſed to be pulled down, His Grace, in 1782, cauſed ſeveral caſemates of brickwork to be made for cannon, and contrived them ſo very injudiciouſly, that the guns in them cannot fire, as they ought, towards the buoy of the ſpit, without recoiling againſt their ſides, and either ſoon ſhaking them down, or overſetting with their own carriages, and maiming the artillery-men employed in working them. They are, indeed, ſo completely abſurd, that it is hardly poſſible for the human mind to conceive any thing to be more ſo. Had a profeſſional man planned and executed them, he would have deſerved not

only cenſure but puniſhment. And it ſurely argues a ſtrange degree of inconſiſtency, firſt to add to the works of a place, and in a ſhort time afterwards to talk ſeriouſly of pulling the whole down and erecting a new one. There is no end to public expenditure, with a perſon who is ſo wavering and inconſiſtent in his reſolutions. The works round Goſport, which are the beſt and moſt ſubſtantial earthen ones I ever ſaw, are likewiſe very imperfect, and totally neglected. The lines adjoining to them are not, in their preſent ſtate, good for much; and terminate on the right too near the dock-yard. Their parapet ſhould be thickened, their ditch widened, and ſloped in the form of a glacis oppoſite to each flank, to take off the dead parts. A work of a moderate ſize, at ſome diſtance from their right, between Hardway and Elſon, would with the troops uſually encamped in time of war in the neighbourhood, effectually ſecure the dock-yard on that ſide againſt any ſmall armaments, that might land with an intention to bombard it. And as to thoſe

who come in ſufficient force to attempt the conqueſt of the country, and are indiſputably maſters at ſea, it is evident, that they will have objects of greater magnitude in view, than the bombardment of a dock-yard, which, as I have ſhewn in Section II. would not by any means be ſo detrimental to it as people commonly imagine. General Lloyd has ſaid, that a good fort ſhould be raiſed on a riſing ground, a few hundred yards off from theſe lines. But he muſt have made this obſervation in a great meaſure at random: for there is no ſuch ſpot to be found within ſome miles of them. It is manifeſt, however, that he never once dreamt of an extenſive line of large fortifications miles diſtant from them, which, ſhould we happen to be engaged in another war before they can be completed, will abſolutely be an invitation to our enemies to invade us. It therefore behoves Parliament to be extremely cautious about giving its aſſent to ſchemes that will exhauſt the Treaſury, while they endanger the ſafety of the State.

FINIS.

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